

## CLAIMS

1. A method for providing vendor-managed inventory services via a vendor managed inventory tool over a network environment, comprising:

receiving a signal from a sensor device indicating that a minimum level specified for a product used in a manufacturing location has been reached, said level  
5 measured by a quantity of said product;

querying a local inventory database at a buyer system for a supply availability status of said product; and

if said supply availability status indicates adequate quantities of said product exist at said buyer system:

10 generating a demand note for resupply of said product;  
transmitting said demand note to local inventory;  
delivering said product to said manufacturing location; and  
updating said local inventory database to reflect said resupply.

2. A method for providing vendor-managed inventory services via a vendor managed inventory tool over a network environment, comprising:

receiving a signal from a sensor device indicating that a minimum level specified for a product used in a manufacturing location has been reached, said level measured by a quantity of said product;

querying a local inventory database at a buyer system for a supply availability status of said product; and

if said supply availability status indicates inadequate quantities of said product exist at said buyer system:

generating a demand note for resupply of said product;

transmitting said demand note to a vendor system;

performing at least one of:

checking local storage at said vendor system for said supply availability status; and

checking local storage at a warehouse for said supply availability status; and

if said supply availability status indicates adequate quantities of said product exist at said vendor system:

notifying said buyer system of said status;

delivering said product to said buyer system;

executing correlated billing activities;

updating said local inventory database at said buyer system to reflect said resupply; and

updating a vendor database at said vendor system;

if said supply availability status indicates inadequate quantities of said product exist at said vendor system:

transmitting said demand note to a factory for manufacture of said product;

delivering said product to said buyer system from said manufacturer;



3. The method of claim 1, wherein said minimum level specified for said product is determined by said buyer system and implemented via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

5 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising specifying a maximum level acceptable for said product via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said demand note includes an order for a product amount commensurate with said maximum level acceptable for said product.

10 6. A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for providing vendor-managed inventory services over a network environment, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to implement a method comprising:

receiving a signal from a sensor device indicating that a minimum level specified for a product used in a manufacturing location has been reached, said level measured by a quantity of said product;

15 querying a local inventory database at a buyer system for a supply availability status of said product; and

if said supply availability status indicates adequate quantities of said product exist at said buyer system:

20 generating a demand note for resupply of said product;  
transmitting said demand note to local inventory;  
delivering said product to said manufacturing location; and  
updating said local inventory database to reflect said resupply.

7. A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for providing vendor-managed inventory services over a network environment, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to implement a method comprising:

5 receiving a signal from a sensor device indicating that a minimum level specified for a product used in a manufacturing location has been reached, said level measured by a quantity of said product;

querying a local inventory database at a buyer system for a supply availability status of said product; and

10 if said supply availability status indicates inadequate quantities of said product exist at said buyer system:

generating a demand note for resupply of said product;

transmitting said demand note to a vendor system;

performing at least one of:

15 checking local storage at said vendor system for said supply availability status; and

checking local storage at a warehouse for said supply availability status; and

20 if said supply availability status indicates adequate quantities of said product exist at said vendor system:

notifying said buyer system of said status;

delivering said product to said buyer system;

executing correlated billing activities;

updating said local inventory database at said buyer system to

25 reflect said resupply; and

updating a vendor database at said vendor system;

if said supply availability status indicates inadequate quantities of said product exist at said vendor system:

transmitting said demand note to a factory for manufacture of

30 said product;

delivering said product to said buyer system from said  
manufacturer;  
executing correlated billing activities;  
updating said local inventory database at said buyer system to  
5 reflect said resupply; and  
updating said vendor database at said vendor system.

8. The storage medium of claim 6, wherein said minimum level specified for said product is determined by said buyer system and implemented via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

5 9. The storage medium of claim 6, further comprising instructions for causing said computer to implement:

specifying a maximum level acceptable for said product via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

10 10. The storage medium of claim 9, wherein said demand note includes an order for a product amount commensurate with said maximum level acceptable for said product.

11. A system for providing vendor-managed inventory services via a vendor-managed inventory tool over a network environment, comprising:

a vendor system including:

15 a server;  
a workstation in communication with said server;  
a data storage device in communication with said server; and  
a storage location in communication with said server;

wherein said communication is facilitated by an electronic communications link; and

20 a network link to:  
a buyer system;  
a manufacturing system; and  
a storage warehouse.

25 12. The system of claim 11, wherein said manufacturing system provides production materials for use by said buyer system.

13. The system of claim 11, wherein said vendor system manages inventory levels for production materials consumed by said buyer system via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein said inventory levels of said production materials are monitored by a sensor device located at said buyer system.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein said sensor device transmits a signal to said vendor system via said vendor-managed inventory tool relating to a specified inventory level.

16. The system of claim 11, wherein said vendor-managed inventory tool facilitates billing activities between said vendor system, said buyer system, said manufacturing system and said warehouse, said activities including:

purchase order generation and transmission;  
demand note generation and transmission; and  
invoice generation and transmission.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein information relating to said billing activities is stored in said data storage device.

18. The system of claim 11, wherein said vendor-managed inventory tool causes said vendor system to provide delivery of said goods pursuant to said demand note.

19. The system of claim 11, wherein said vendor-managed inventory tool causes said vendor system to provide delivery of goods pursuant to said purchase order.